



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

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Mr. Steven D. Tibbetts
Superintendent
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Eastern Nevada Agency
P. O. Box 5400
Elko, NV 89802

Dear Mr. Tibbetts:

This correspondence refers to the BIA Road Maintenance Yard located in Owyhee, Nevada on land of the Duck Valley Paiute Tribe.

In view of the massive groundwater contamination in the general area of the BIA facility which dates back to early 1988, this office has carried out a detailed file review. From this review and the field report of the EPA circuit Rider who visited the site during October 18- 20, 1994 EPA's understanding of the status of this site is as follows:

- * Among various possible sources of groundwater contamination is the BIA Road Maintenance Yard and a 1,000 feet long buried 2" or 4" pipe line which used to carry heating oil to BIA facilities. The pipe line was de-activated in 1985 but not removed from the ground. The pipe line was identified as the principal cause of soil contamination and possibly groundwater contamination. A soil sample taken in the pipe run on July 6, 1988 showed analytical results of 12,000 ppm of TPH.
- * The BIA Road Maintenance Yard had a grease pit and sump where used oil and grease was dumped directly into the ground. This practice was stopped and the sump filled in probably sometime in 1988. A 12,000 Gallon Diesel UST located along the East side of the maintenance building was removed in March 1988 without EPA oversight. This tank was registered with this office as required by 40 CFR § 280.22 but no sampling was done during tank excavation.
- * Tribal Drinking water wells # 1 and #3 are located approximately 200 feet NNE of the BIA maintenance building(# 323) and approximately 180 feet from the N- S leg of the fuel pipeline. The groundwater flow appears to be in a generally northern direction. Water quality test taken in 1988 and 1989 indicated no contaminants

above drinking water MCL.

However, field investigations and a water sampling program carried out in 1988 and 1989 showed that water from tribal well # 3 had a sheen and strong hydrocarbon odor. Both well # 1 and # 3 are shut down at this time. A new drinking water well has been constructed 3 miles north of the contaminated wells.

- * In addition to the BIA site two other sites may have contributed to the groundwater contamination. The school bus maintenance facility of the Owyhee high school with a 5,000 gallon and 1,000 gallon Diesel and gasoline UST respectively, both of which are still in operation. the location of these tanks is 10 feet east of the BIA location. The greatest concentration of floating hydrocarbons were found in test trenches dug in front of the tribal maintenance building, 60 feet east of the BIA maintenance building.
- * There are numerous Above Ground Storage Tanks (AST's) located in the general area of the above mentioned facilities. Reportedly, none of them have been equipped with automatic shut-off valves or impermeable catchment basins around the AST's as required.

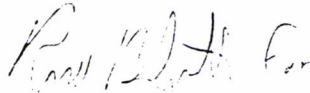
In accordance with 40 CFR § 280 Subpart E a Phase Two Site Assessment of the BIA maintenance facility and fuel pipe line must be carried out immediately. These activities must include but are not limited to the following:

- Define the vertical and lateral extent of soil and groundwater contamination.
- Define the direction and gradient of the unconfined aquifer.
- Establish depth to groundwater and measure seasonal variations in the groundwater level.
- Sample all water wells within 1/4 mile radius of the BIA maintenance facility on a quarterly for BTEX and TPH.
- Sample the trench of the abandoned heating oil pipe line at 5 feet depth and interval of 25 feet for 400 feet starting at the BIA road maintenance Yard.
- Sample the tank pit where a 12,000 gallon Diesel UST was located immediately south and east of the old power plant (# 333).

Based upon the data generated in the Phase Two Site Assessment a comprehensive corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be prepared and executed.

Pursuant to §9005 [42 U.S.C. §6991(d)] of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended, EPA requires that you furnish the above information within **60 calendar days** from your receipt of this letter. **Your immediate attention is needed in this matter.** If you have any questions, please contact Walt Guggenheimer at (415) 744-2094.

Sincerely,



Patricia D. Eklund, Chief
Office of Underground Storage Tanks

cc: Joe Kenny, Circuit Rider
Walter Mills, Area Director, BIA
John Krause, BIA
Marvin Weber, IHS
Lindsey Manning, Chairman

ATTACHMENT: LIST OF CONTACTS

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